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Backed by IMA, doctors protest 'mandatory' rural internship rule

POSTGRAD COURSES

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MORE than 100 medical graduates across the city, with the support of Indian Medical Association (IMA) and Association of Healthcare Providers (AHPJ), protested the policy of one-year mandatory internship before post-graduation by taking out a rally on Mahalaxmi Racecourse Road Monday.

The Medical Council of India (MCI), which amended the Post Graduate Medical Education Regulations a month ago after seeking approval from the Centre, states that a candidate has to compulsorily serve a rural health post to become eligible for post-graduate entrance exams in medical colleges.

Vineet Maheshwari, an intern at KEM Hospital, said, "We need to serve rural areas in healthcare sector. But if we are made to work at a Public Health Centre (PHC) before appearing for entrance exams, it will hamper our studies and affect our work in the rural area." He added that there was no guarantee of getting admission in medical colleges even after they complete the one-year internship.

At present, there are 14,500 seats for post-graduate level across the country, for which there are



Some of the doctors at a candle-light protest.

more than one lakh candidates.

"Right now, there are 47,688 under-graduate seats in India. While our country produces many graduates, there are limited post-graduate seats. As a result, several students seek PG education from foreign countries. The number of PG seats should be increased," said IMA (Mumbai) secretary Dr Suresh Doshi.

Another student, Dr Suran-

jana Basak, said it was essential to include internship as a part of post-graduate study. "If we work before our post-graduation, our knowledge will be limited. It is important to do internship along with or after post-graduation, so that we can work as specialists," she said.

The country has 23,458 PHCs, out of which 1,212 have no building infrastructure, according to data

from IMA. "Several MBBS doctors are discouraged to work in rural areas due to lack of infrastructure," Basak said.

In similar rallies that took place in Bangalore, Jaipur, Hyderabad, Mysore, Guwahati and Hisar, students voiced their angst against fewer seats and compulsory internship before post-graduation.

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